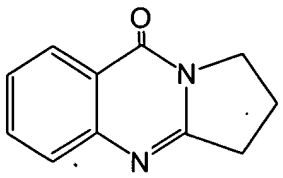
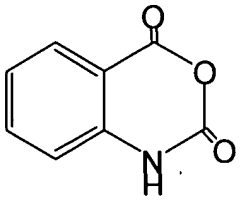
In the Claims:

1-30 (cancelled)

31. (previously presented) A process for producing a compound or reaction product of the following formula (I)



(I)



(II)

comprising the steps of:

converting a compound of formula (II) with 2-pyrrolidone in an amount of 1.5 to 5 mol relative to the amount of compound (II) to form a reaction mixture;

heating said reaction mixture to an initial temperature of 70°C to 130°C;

maintaining said initial temperature for a period of 0.5 to 2 hours;

subsequently heating said reaction mixture to a subsequent temperature of 140°C to 200°C;

maintaining said subsequent temperature for a period of 1 to 8 hours; and

crystallizing said reaction product (I) to isolate said reaction product (I) directly from said reaction mixture.

32. (previously presented) The process according to claim 31, wherein said process comprises using 2-pyrrolidone in an amount of 2 to 4 mol relative to the amount of compound (II).

33. (previously presented) The process according to claim 32, wherein said process

comprises using 2-pyrrolidone in an amount of 2.5 to 3.5 mol relative to the amount of compound (II).

34. (previously presented) The process according to claim 31, wherein said process comprises the step of initially heating said reaction mixture to an initial temperature of 80 to 120 °C and subsequently heating said reaction mixture to a subsequent temperature of 150 to 190 °C.

35. (previously presented) The process according to claim 31, wherein said process comprises the step of maintaining said initial temperature for a period of 1 to 1.5 hours and maintaining said subsequent temperature for a period of 2 to 5 hours.

36. (previously presented) The process according to claim 31, further comprising the steps of:

cooling said reaction mixture;

seeding said reaction mixture, after cooling, with seed crystals of compound (I); and

maintaining said reaction mixture seeded with said seed crystals at room temperature for a period of 24 hours to 7 days to enable crystallisation.

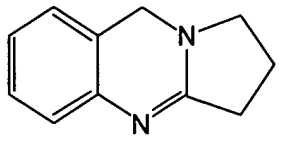
37. (previously presented) The process according to claim 36, comprising the step of maintaining said reaction mixture seeded with said seed crystals at a temperature of at least 25 °C for a period of 50 to 100 hours to enable crystallisation.

38. (previously presented) The process according to claim 37, wherein said crystallisation is carried through at a temperature of 30 to 70 °C.

39. (previously presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein said crystallisation

is carried through at a temperature of 40 to 60 °C.

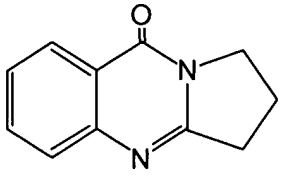
40. (previously presented) A process for producing a compound of formula (III),



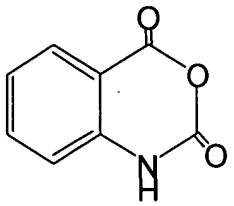
(III)

said process comprising the steps of:

(A) preparing a compound of formula (I) by converting a compound of formula (II)



(I)



(II)

with 2-pyrrolidone in an amount of 1.5 to 5 mol relative to the amount of compound (II);

(B) crystallizing compound (I) to isolate compound (I) directly from the reaction mixture;

(C) performing a reduction reaction to provide said compound (III) in salt form; and

(D) liberating compound (III) from the salt.

41. (previously presented) The process according to claim 40, comprising the step of performing said reduction reaction (step C) in the presence of zinc and acid.

42. (previously presented) The process according to claim 41, comprising the step of initially dissolving said compound (I) in glacial acetic acid and subsequently adding zinc and hydrochloric acid to said compound (I) dissolved in glacial acetic acid.

43. (previously presented) The process according to claim 42, comprising the step of performing said reduction reaction in the presence of aqueous sulfuric acid and zinc dust.

44. (previously presented) The process according to claim 40, further comprising the step of, subsequent to step (C), isolating said compound (III) as a salt by crystallisation from said reaction mixture.

45. (previously presented) The process according to claim 40, further comprising the step of, in step (D), adding a base to said reaction mixture to liberate said compound (III) from the salt.

46. (previously presented) The process according to claim 45, wherein said base is NaOH.

47. (previously presented) The process according to claim 45, wherein step (D) is carried through under heating, and further comprising the step of obtaining said compound (III), which is liberated from the salt in molten form.

48. (previously presented) The process according to claim 47, further comprising the step of cooling down said compound (III) present in molten form by freezing and, after freezing, crystallizing said compound (III) from an aqueous alkaline solution.

49. (previously presented) The process according to claim 40, wherein said compound (III) is liberated from the salt in molten form.

50. (previously presented) The process according to claim 49, further comprising the step of cooling down said compound (III) present in molten form to freezing and subsequently

crystallizing said compound (III) from an aqueous alkaline solution.

51. (previously presented) The process according to claim 49, further comprising the step of separating said compound (III) from the reaction mixture in liquid form.

52. (previously presented) The process according to claim 51, further comprising the following steps:

reducing said compound (I) to compound (III) to provide said compound (III) in salt form; and

adding a base to said compound (III) to liberate said compound (III) from the salt and to separate said compound (III) out in liquid form.